

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 11, 12, 14-25, and 27 are pending in this application. Claims 11, 12, 20, 24, and 25 are amended herein. Claim 7-10, 13, and 26 are cancelled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 27 is added herein. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found in the claims as originally filed. The amendments to claims 11 and 12, in particular, place claims 11 and 12 into independent form and are thus unrelated to patentability. Similarly, the amendments to claims 24 and 25 place those claims into independent form, and are thus also unrelated to patentability. Reconsideration is requested based on the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 101:

Claims 20-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 20-25 were amended to recite a "computer-readable recording medium." Claims 20-25 are thus submitted be directed to statutory subject matter. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 20-25 is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,041,306 to Du et al. (hereinafter "Du"). The rejection is traversed to the extent it would apply to the claims as amended.

The claimed invention, in several embodiments, relates to a workflow controlling system in which a first group of client devices are connected to a network and can share information with a second group of client devices. The information is shared by way of an internal information exchanging server device and also an outsider cooperative server device, both of which are connected to the first and second groups of client devices.

Claim 20, in particular, recites,

"an outsider cooperative server connected to client devices of respective departments outside the company through a network."

Du neither teaches, discloses, nor suggests "an outsider cooperative server connected to client devices of respective departments outside the company through a network," as recited in claim 20. Du, rather, is related to a system and method for performing flexible work flow process execution in a distributed management system. As shown in Fig. 1, a plurality of users can

access a plurality of client devices connected to a network, and an operation is performed along with workflow process monitoring.

Furthermore, control of the operation may be carried out by referring to the workflow operation information stored in a database on a server, or in each of the user computers. No mention is made in Du of "an outsider cooperative server connected to client devices of respective departments outside the company through a network," as recited in claim 20. Claim 20 is submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 20 is earnestly solicited.

Claims 21, 22, and 23 depend from claim 20 and add further distinguishing elements. Claims 21, 22, and 23 are thus also submitted to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 21, 22, and 23 is also earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter:

The Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 11, 12, 24, and 25 contain allowable subject matter, and the allowance of claims 1-6 and 14-19. Claims 11, 12, 24, and 25 have consequently been amended to include substantially the subject matters of claim 7 or claim 20, placing them in independent form. Claims 11, 12, 24, and 25 are thus believed to be allowable as well.

New Claim 27:

New claim 27 recites,

"an outsider cooperative server connected to a plurality of client devices installed at different departments outside said company and to said server device through said network."

None of the cited references teach, disclose, or suggest "an outsider cooperative server connected to a plurality of client devices installed at different departments outside said company and to said server device through said network." Claim 27 is thus believed to be allowable.

Conclusion:

Accordingly, in view of the reasons given above, it is submitted that all of claims 1-6, 11, 12, 14-25, and 27 are allowable over the cited references. Allowance of all claims 1-6, 11, 12, 14-25, and 27 and of this entire application is therefore respectfully requested.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

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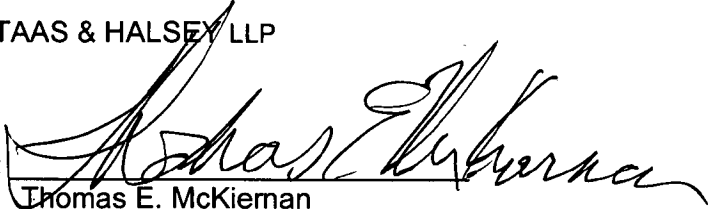
If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 30 NO 05

By:



Thomas E. McKiernan
Registration No. 37,889

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501